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PHILOSOPHY *in the* UNITED STATES

John Lachs
Robert B. Talisse
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

The Currents in American Scholarship series offers Americanists abroad updates on the status of theory and practice in disciplines relevant to the study of the society, culture and institutions of the United States of America. Prominent scholars from across the U.S. graciously accepted the invitation of the Study of the U.S. Branch to author annotated bibliographies. We hope the series proves to be valuable in introducing or refreshing courses on the United States, or expanding library collections.

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The Authors

John Lachs is the Centennial Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University. His philosophical interests center on human nature. This takes him into metaphysics, philosophy of mind, political philosophy, and ethics. He has continuing research interests in American philosophy and in German Idealism, along with research and teaching interests in medical and business ethics. John Lachs is general editor of *An Encyclopedia of American Philosophy* (Garland). In 2001, an issue of *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* was devoted to his essay "Both Better Off and Better: Moral Progress Amid Continuing Carnage," with responses from a half dozen philosophers. Other recent publications include *On Santayana* (forthcoming) and *A Community of Individuals* (2002).

Robert B. Talisse is an assistant professor of philosophy at Vanderbilt University, having received his Ph.D. at the City University of New York Graduate Center in 2001. Dr. Talisse specializes in Political Philosophy and American Philosophy and currently focuses on deliberative democracy; liberalism; pragmatism. In 2003, his article "Can Democracy be a Way of Life? Deweyan Democracy and the Problem of Pluralism," was published in *Transactions of the C. S. Peirce Society* while "Teaching Plato's *Euthyphro* Dialogically," appeared in *Teaching Philosophy.* The book *On James: Philosophy as Vision*, co-authored with Micah Hester, was also published in 2003. The authors have recently collaborated on the forthcoming *An Encyclopedia of American Philosophy.*

PHILOSOPHY *in the* UNITED STATES

The philosophical scene in the Unites States today is perhaps more vigorous than ever. At least in this respect a key aspiration of the founding of the country has been achieved. In the United States, one finds ample representation of all historical schools of philosophy and every intellectual trend, from Platonism to deconstruction, from logical positivism to existential phenomenology, from scientific naturalism to process theology and native wisdom traditions. Although professional philosophers sometimes still speak as if this variety were reducible to two or three distinct philosophical approaches, the *Analytic,* the *Continental* and the *American,* the obsolescence of these categories is steadily becoming more apparent.

Philosophy in the United States hence looks like a microcosm of philosophy across the globe, with fascinating sites of intersection and influence among otherwise separate traditions and schools.

The topic of "Philosophy in the United States" is therefore altogether too broad for this brief survey. Instead, we will concentrate on a unique set of philosophical tendencies sometimes referred to by the term "American Philosophy." The center of this tradition is pragmatism, which is currently enjoying a vigorous revival, but it also includes American versions of idealism, scientific naturalism and personalism. Key figures of American philosophy in this sense include Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), William James (1842–1909), Josiah Royce (1855–1916), John Dewey (1859–1952), Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), George Santayana (1863–1952), C. I. Lewis (1883–1964), and Ernest Nagel (1901–1985). More recent representatives of the tradition include Sidney Hook (1902–1989), W. V. O. Quine (1908–2000), Wilfrid

Sellars (1912–1989), Hilary Putnam (1926–), Richard Rorty (1931–), John J. McDermott (1932–), Susan Haack (1945–), John J. Stuhr (1951–) and Cornel West (1953–).

Of course, neither of these lists is exhaustive, and much recent scholarship has been devoted to the ideas and influence of women, African-American, and Native American thinkers such as Jane Addams (1860–1935), Alain Locke (1886–1954), and Black Elk (1863–1950). Since we cannot treat all aspects of American philosophy in the space available, we shall restrict ourselves to discussing the most prevalent figures and issues.

We begin with a rough characterization of those issues, tendencies and approaches that have shaped the American tradition of philosophizing. They are closely bound up with the American experience itself. American philosophy is focused upon the *problem of tradition*: many of its practitioners saw as a central issue the comforting and stifling effects of traditional ways of doing philosophy. Intellectual traditions are comforting because they provide ready-made frameworks within which to think; they are stifling when they prove unresponsive to new conditions and problems. Like the social and political experiment of founding the Unites States, American philosophy represents an attempt to break with tradition while maintaining continuity.

A criticism of the traditional assumptions, problems and methods of Western philosophy occupies the core of the work of many American thinkers; they aim to offer a new vision of philosophy itself. This anti-traditionalism points to another characteristic of American thought, namely, the emphasis upon action. American philosophies typically represent contemplation as backward-looking and thus inappropriately deferential to the past; action, by contrast, is prospective and directed upon the future. The American tradition is thus also focused on consequences, and often proposes to analyze philosophical ideas in terms of the impact they have on human practice.

Though consequentialists in a broad sense, American philosophers are not typically utilitarians: they do not evaluate actions and practices in terms of their propensity to satisfy such preexisting standards as pleasure. Instead, they tend to be *experimentalists,* looking to *experience* to provide standards of value and knowledge. They view experience as *scientific* in the sense of being a fallible yet self-correcting guide to an open future. The American tradition is, therefore, *meliorist*: it sees what is to come as indeterminate and ordinary individuals as capable of and responsible for shaping it. This makes the American tradition unabashedly *progressivist*: it aims not for some final Good, but for piecemeal advances and workable solutions to problems. On the whole, American philosophy is also democratic in temperament, embracing self-development and self-government as necessary for a rich human life.

The following pages provide a guide to recent activity in American philosophy. Because a great deal of the vitality of American thought today grows out of consideration of the work of the classical figures, we have organized this guide on that principle. We intend to provide a useful overview and by no means an exhaustive bibliography. The centrality of pragmatism in the historical development of American philosophy

and on the current scene demands that we devote much of our attention to pragmatists. Nevertheless, we shall not neglect other major trends and figures.

Broad Treatments: Initial Bibliographic Suggestions

Our focused approach to the topic makes it inevitable that some scholars will seek information about materials we shall not examine. In this section we try to accommodate such readers by suggesting texts that treat American philosophy more broadly than we can here.

For those interested in reading representative selections from figures not discussed here or who seek a comprehensive collection of American thinkers, we recommend *American Philosophies: An Anthology,* edited by Leonard Harris, Scott Pratt, and Anne Waters (2002); this volume contains the most expansive collection of readings available in a single book. A good text of primary readings of more modest scope is *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy,* John Stuhr, ed. (2001); this book features, in addition to readings from the major figures of American philosophy, some new essays authored by prominent contemporary scholars. Another notable collection is *American Ethics,* edited by G. W. Stroh and Howard Callaway (2000). *Reflections: An Anthology African-American Philosophy,* edited by J. Montmarquet and W. Hardy (1999) and *Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates,* edited by Eduardo Mendieta (2003) provide comprehensive arrays of readings in African-American and Latin-American thought.

Reference works focusing on biographical, bibliographical, intellectual, and historical matters in American philosophy are also available. Of these, we recommend *A Companion to American Thought* edited by Richard Wrightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg (1998), *The Dictionary of Modern American Philosophers* edited by John Shook (forthcoming), the *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 279: American Philosophers, 1950–2000* edited by Philip B. Dematteis and Leemon B. McHenry (2003), and *An Encyclopedia of American Philosophy,* edited by John Lachs and Robert B. Talisse (forthcoming).

Some scholars may be particularly interested in primary texts by specific American figures. We shall have occasion later to discuss critical and scholarly editions; here we note that many texts in American philosophy are available in inexpensive reprint editions through Prometheus Books, Hackett Publishing, and Dover Publishing. These presses publish major works by Emerson, Peirce, James, Dewey, Santayana, and Hook, among many others. Also, the Library of America

publishes fine volumes of unabridged texts from a wide variety of American authors, including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Thomas Paine, and W. E. B. DuBois.

In addition to these editions, many writings by and about American philosophers are available in reprint editions through the *History of American Thought* series by Thoemmes Press. This series aims to be comprehensive, and so contains volumes of the work of numerous minor figures in American thought; in many cases, the volumes constitute the only in-print editions of these writers. Those desiring concise introductory treatments of single figures in American thought may consult the Philosophers Series published by Wadsworth Publishing Co. This series features brief and reliable introductions to many of the major American figures. Titles include *On Peirce* (deWaal 2000), *On James* (Talisse and Hester 2004), *On Dewey* (Talisse 2000), *On Mead* (deWaal 2001), *On Royce* (Trotter 2001), *On Santayana* (Lachs forthcoming), *On Jane Addams* (Fischer 2002), *On Thoreau* (Hahn 1999), *On Emerson* (Hodge 2002), *On Whitehead* (Rose 2002), *On Quine* (Nelson and Nelson 1999), *On Rorty* (Rumana 1999), and *On Putnam* (Maitra 2002). These volumes also include ample bibliographical guidance; they are good places to begin a focused study.

The resurgence of interest in American philosophy that began in the 1980s among professional philosophers has naturally caught the attention of intellectual historians. Consequently, those primarily interested in historical treatments of American philosophy have several options. The most celebrated of these is Louis Menand's (2001) *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America,* which is focused primarily upon the pragmatists (Peirce, James, and Dewey) and their intellectual predecessors (especially Oliver Wendell Holmes). Written for a general audience, Menand's book is engaging and entertaining, though in places philosophically simplistic. A more scholarly and wider ranging recent account is Bruce Kuklick's (2001) *A History of Philosophy in America: 1720–2000.* Kuklick's study spans the development of American thought from Jonathan Edwards to contemporary figures such as Wilfrid Sellars and Richard Rorty. It is something of a continuation of his earlier work, *Churchmen and Philosophers* (1987) and *The Rise of American Philosophy* (1977), which are also well worth study. John E. Smith's (1983) *The Spirit of American Philosophy* and *America's Philosophical Vision* (1992) elegantly demonstrate the richness of the American philosophical tradition.

Two of the philosophically soundest historical treatments of American philosophy remain Herbert Schneider's (1963) *History of American Philosophy* and the two-volume work penned by Elizabeth Flower and Murray Murphy (1977), *A History of Philosophy in America.* Since they were both written prior to 1980, these books do not incorporate the significant developments that have occurred since then. Although they are in this sense dated, both studies are essential for a sound grasp of American thought. A groundbreaking philosophical survey of the American tradition, broadly conceived as including figures from Emerson to Quine, is Cornel West's (1989) *The American Evasion of Philosophy.*

We close this section of initial suggestions by mentioning some of the recent literature attempting to establish new connections between American philosophy and other intellectual styles and traditions. Two important studies of the relationships between American philosophy and Native American thought are Bruce Wilshire's (2000) *Primal Roots of American Philosophy* and Scott Pratt's (2002) *Native Pragmatism.* John Lysaker's (2002) *You Must Change Your Life* applies themes in American philosophy to poetry and literary criticism. Russell Goodman's (1991) *American Philosophy and the Romantic Turn* draws upon Emerson and others in a discussion of the relations between American thought and Continental philosophy. Judith Green (1999) offers an engaging exploration of the resources in American and Continental thought for community building and participatory politics entitled *Deep Democracy.* In his *In Love With Life,* John Lachs (2000) builds upon American philosophy in presenting a series of reflections on life, loss, joy, and death, intended for a popular audience.

Those who wish to follow work in American philosophy as it appears may want to consult the journals where it is published. Although essays on pragmatism and other American philosophical approaches may appear in any journal, the *Transactions of the C.S. Peirce Society* has for many years been considered the publication of record in the field. The *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, the recent revival of a distinguished journal of the first half of the twentieth century, has also been publishing interesting work in American thought. *The Personalist Forum* specializes in studies and extensions of personalism; *Process Studies* focuses on developments in process philosophy; *Streams of William James* is devoted to essays related to William James; *Overheard in Seville* publishes essays and bibliographical materials related to George Santayana.

The best way to contact scholars working in American philosophy is to join and attend the meetings of one of the many societies flourishing in the field. The Eastern Division of The American Philosophical Association offers the William James Prize for the best work in American thought. The Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy is a major group of scholars convening in conjunction with each of the three annual APA meetings, but also in a national conference every March. It publishes a *Newsletter* with articles and book reviews. The Personalist Group organizes international conferences on personalist themes. There are, moreover, societies devoted to outstanding individual figures in American thought: in addition to the vigorous C.S. Peirce Society, there is a William James Society, a Santayana Society and, most recently, a Josiah Royce Society.

Scholars interested in the work of the classical figures of American philosophy may want to establish contact with philosophers at the Dewey Center at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, The Peirce Edition Project and The Santayana Edition, both at Indiana University—Purdue University at Indianapolis, and The Letters of William James edition at Texas A&M University. Well-informed specialists at these centers have access to a wide array of manuscripts and secondary literature; they take pride in being helpful to visiting scholars or those needing information.

Finally, we should mention that one can find on the internet several sites devoted to research in American philosophy. The most comprehensive of these is *The Pragmatism Cybrary* (www.pragmatism.org), maintained by John Shook of Oklahoma State University. Visitors to this page will find news and announcements concerning recent publications, upcoming conferences and lectures, tables of contents of recent journals, links to other sites of interest, a collection of original essays, and an up-to-date comprehensive bibliography of all major works in American philosophy. There are, in addition, several e-mail discussion listservs devoted to the works and ideas of figures in American philosophy. The John Dewey discussion list (Dewey-L) is hosted by Tom Burke of the University of South Carolina. Burke also hosts a list devoted to the work of Mead. Joseph Ransdell of Texas Tech University hosts a listserv focusing on Peirce, and there is a William James discussion list hosted by Jerry Shepperd. Information about subscribing to all of these lists can be found at *The Pragmatism Cybrary*.

The Origins of Pragmatism

Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey are the generally acknowledged founding figures of pragmatism. Yet controver-

sies swirl regarding what pragmatism is. The disagreements are evident in two well-known studies of pragmatism, A. O. Lovejoy's classic essay (1908) "The Thirteen Pragmatisms," and A. J. Ayer's (1968) *The Origins of Pragmatism.* They are further reflected in H. S. Thayer's (1968) landmark examination, *Meaning and Action: A Critical History of Pragmatism* and H. O. Mounce's (1997) recent work *The Two Pragmatisms.*

Accordingly, it is difficult to identify the precise theses that the founders of the movement share. Moreover, despite the efforts of some, such as John P. Murphy (1990) in his *Pragmatism: From Peirce to Davidson,* to trace direct lines of influence or similarity, the current tendencies designated as "neopragmatist" are typically only loosely related to the views advanced by those who first called themselves pragmatists. As the neopragmatist Richard Rorty, in his book *Consequences of Pragmatism,* says, "'Pragmatism' is a vague, ambiguous, and overworked word" (1982, 160). We begin with a brief historical account of the origins of pragmatism, and then turn to discussions of Peirce, James, and Dewey. Issues concerning neopragmatism and the future of the pragmatist tradition will be taken up in the final section of this essay.

Charles Sanders Peirce (pronounced "purse"), the thinker credited with founding the pragmatist movement, first proposed the principal tenets of the view at meetings of an informal philosophy group in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the early 1870s. The group called itself "The Metaphysical Club" and featured an illustrious membership that included William James, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Chauncy Wright. The philosophical influence of this group upon James and Peirce has been examined in a seminal essay by Max Fisch (1964), "Was There a Metaphysical Club in Cambridge?" and a decisive book by Edward Madden (1963), *Chauncy Wright and the Foundations of Pragmatism.*

Drawing upon the discussions of the Metaphysical Club, Peirce wrote two essays, "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," which mark the birth of pragmatism. These essays were published in *Popular Science Monthly* in the years 1877 and 1878, respectively, as the first two installments in a series of six papers collectively entitled *Illustrations of the Logic of Science.* Each of them articulates a key pragmatist theme.

In "The Fixation of Belief," Peirce introduces the functionalist theory of belief that lies at the heart of pragmatism. According to this view, beliefs are in the first instance *plans for action* rather than reports about the world. As a consequence, reflection on one's beliefs with a view to improving them (what Peirce called "inquiry") arises only when one's

action is obstructed. The second key pragmatist notion, advanced in "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" and often identified as "the pragmatic maxim," is closely related to the behaviorist theory of meaning. According to this maxim, the meaning of an idea or belief consists in the practical effects that would follow from acting on it. To borrow a simple example from Peirce, *x is hard* means that *x will not be scratched by many other objects, but will scratch many other objects.* In this way, the meaning of a proposition is a prediction and an associated proposal for action.

An important implication of this position is that when two semantically distinct propositions entail the same action proposal, they mean the same thing; by the same token, when a proposition makes no action proposal, it is meaningless. Peirce often employs the pragmatic maxim as a criterion by which metaphysical disputes could be dismissed as nonsensical. For this reason, he is sometimes seen as an early exponent of logical positivism. He was, however, not opposed to all metaphysics, but only to the variety that is insufficiently attentive to natural science. Peirce himself attempted to devise a scientific, rather than a speculative, metaphysics.

Although Peirce's "Fixation" and "Ideas" essays are today considered among the most influential in modern philosophy, they received little notice at the time of their publication. Pragmatism lay dormant until William James revived it in an 1898 address entitled "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results." In this essay, James credits Peirce with first proposing pragmatism, but maintains that its principles should be expressed more broadly. James proposed that the psychological effects of holding a belief be considered part of its pragmatic meaning. Hence, according to James, traditional metaphysical disputes are not to be dismissed as meaningless, but reinterpreted as conflicts of different sorts of personal temperaments. Traditional empiricism and rationalism marked for James not simply opposed philosophical schools, but also different psychological types. Noting the near impossibility of living as a strict empiricist or rationalist, James offered his version of pragmatism as a mediating philosophy that synthesized the best in the rationalist and empiricist programs.

James's broadened version of pragmatism was given full expression in a series of 1906 lectures, published in 1907 with the title *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking.* By this time, the pragmatic movement was growing steadily, winning adherents in England, France, and Italy. Whereas Peirce's writings were largely unnoticed by the philosophical community, James's pragmatism became the subject of

vigorous controversy. *Pragmatism* precipitated a flurry of critiques and supposed refutations from various thinkers, including two eminent British philosophers, Bertrand Russell (1907) and G. E. Moore (1907). According to many critics, James's pragmatism was simply the philosophical expression of the vulgarities of American commercialism.

John Dewey was a student in Peirce's graduate course in logic during the latter's brief appointment at Johns Hopkins University, where Dewey took his Ph. D. Although Dewey's early work strongly reflected Hegelian influences, he eventually came to defend a distinctive version of pragmatism that he sometimes preferred to call "experimental naturalism." The fundamental category for Dewey was not mind or body, but rather *organism*, conceived as the dynamic interplay of creature and environment. The pillar of his pragmatism is the Darwinian concept of *interaction,* which he also called "transaction"; in fact, Dewey launched a new empiricism based upon the idea that experience does not consist of "internal" representations of the "outside world," but is rather a dynamic creature/environment interface, a continuous process of doings and undergoings. With this new conception of experience, Dewey developed a form of pragmatism that constitutes a comprehensive philosophical system, ranging from logic and metaphysics to ethics, aesthetics and the philosophy of religion.

Peirce, James, and Dewey were sharply critical of each other's work. Unhappy with James's pragmatism, Peirce in 1905 distanced his philosophy from that of James by renaming it "pragmaticism," a name Peirce hoped was "ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers." In a 1908 review of James's Pragmatism, "What Pragmatism Means by Practical," Dewey also expressed dissatisfaction with James's view; eventually, Dewey, like Peirce, abandoned the term. Peirce was displeased with Dewey's work, writing a critical review of one of Dewey's early books in logical theory in *The Nation* in 1904, as well as a harsh personal letter to Dewey. These episodes are chronicled in two important essays: Larry Hickman's (1986) "Why Peirce Didn't Like Dewey's Logic" (*Southwest Philosophical Review,* 3(1986):178–89) and Vincent Colapietro's (2002) "Experimental Logic: Normative Theory or Natural History?"

Despite the efforts of Dewey and Peirce to distinguish their views from those of James, today the three are often discussed collectively, and James's *Pragmatism* remains in the minds of many the principal formulation of the pragmatist position. Although pragmatism, in its various forms, remained an influential philosophical perspective throughout Dewey's life, interest in it declined dramatically in the 1950s as new

styles of philosophizing came to prominence. Since the 1980s, however, a vigorous "neo-pragmatist" movement has taken hold in philosophy. Contemporary philosophers such as Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, and Cornel West have put the insights of the original pragmatists to work within the contexts of current debates. Not unlike that of their predecessors, the work of the neo-pragmatists has met with thorough and even harsh criticism. Nonetheless, today the ideas of Peirce, James, and Dewey are once again at the center of philosophical debate.

Charles Sanders Peirce

Currently, we are in the midst of a golden age of Peirce scholarship. This is due in no small measure to The Peirce Edition Project's *The Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition* (Indiana University Press), whose first six volumes of a projected thirty are in print as of this writing. When finished, this edition will be the first to make available a complete collection of Peirce's works. It has already become the scholarly standard. The *Chronological Edition* replaces the prior standard, the eight-volume *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* from Harvard University Press (a CD-ROM version available from Intelex), which has been long out of print and was in any case far from a complete collection. The Peirce Edition Project has also produced a handy two-volume *The Essential Peirce,* which, as its title suggests, contains all of Peirce's most important essays.

Among the earliest fruits of the recent flowering of interest in Peirce are two intellectual biographies. Joseph Brent's (1998) *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life* tells the tragic story of Peirce's lifelong search for stability in his personal and professional lives. Kenneth Lane Ketner's (1999) *His Glassy Essence* provocatively claims to be an "autobiography" of Peirce; the projected three-volume work, of which only the first volume has been published so far, pulls together all the biographical data and every autobiographical remark Peirce penned into a compelling narrative that is part detective novel and part exercise in Peircean inquiry.

Peirce scholars disagree on the question of whether Peirce's writings present a single, coherent philosophical system or a series of philosophically fecund but ultimately unsuccessful attempts to produce such a system. The secondary literature divides neatly according to the "systematic" and the "developmental" interpretations of Peirce. Thomas Goudge's (1950) *The Thought of C. S. Peirce* and Murray Murphy's (1961) *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* are classic examples of the anti-systematic reading; James K. Feibleman's (1946) *An Introduction* to

Peirce's Philosophy, by contrast, argues for a systematic interpretation. In his *Strands of System,* Douglas Anderson (1995) attempts to develop a middle position, maintaining that Peirce had the fundamentals of a coherent philosophical system, but never produced an organized articulation of it. Anderson also provides a very helpful discussion of the entire controversy.

Other important examinations of Peirce's philosophy are Justus Buchler's (1939) classic *Charles Peirce's Empiricism*, Karl-Otto Apel's (1981) *Charles S. Peirce: From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism* and Christopher Hookway's *Peirce* (1985), all of which present good introductions to the whole of Peirce's corpus.

Much of the recent work on Peirce focuses on specific aspects of his thought, often in order to relate them to contemporary philosophical debates. A collection edited by Kennneth Ketner (1995), *Peirce and Contemporary Thought,* features essays on Peirce by many prominent philosophers, but tends to focus on Peirce's contributions to logic, metaphysics, and philosophy of science. Yet Peirce's most original philosophical work is focused on the theory of signs, which he called *semiotic;* several important studies of this area of Peirce's philosophy have emerged in recent decades. John K. Shariff's (1994) *Charles Peirce's Guess at the Riddle* and Vincent Colapietro's (1989) *Peirce's Approach to the Self* provide helpful introductions to Peircean semiotic. A more specialized study may be found in Gerard Deledalle's (2001) *Charles S. Peirce's Philosophy of Signs*.

Peirce contributed to most of the traditional areas of philosophy. His metaphysics is examined in Andrew Reynolds'(2002) *Peirce's Scientific Metaphysics.* His epistemology and theory of inquiry are the subjects of Peter Skagestad's *The Road of Inquiry* (1981). Continuity is shown to be the central idea unifying his system in Kelly Parker's (1998) *The Continuity of Peirce's Thought.* Peirce's philosophy of science and related issues are examined in Nicholas Rescher's (1979) *Charles Peirce's Philosophy of Science* and Sandra Rosenthal's (1994) *Charles Peirce's Pragmatic Pluralism. The Cambridge Companion to Peirce,* edited by Cheryl Misak (2004), presents new essays by many leading scholars on all areas of Peirce's thought.

In contemporary philosophical discussion, Peirce is best known for his controversial thesis regarding truth. In "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" and other writings, Peirce claims that truth is what inquirers would come to believe at the "end of inquiry." That is, only those propositions are true which can withstand endless examination; the views of a

sufficiently persistent community of inquirers are fated to converge on the truth. This has been declared a puzzling view beset by difficulties. It is ably defended in Cheryl Misak's (1991) *Truth and the End of Inquiry* and Christopher Hookway's (2000) *Truth, Rationality and Pragmatism.*

William James

The *Works of William James* were published by Harvard University Press in six volumes. This edition is now out of print, and as of this writing there are, unfortunately, no plans to bring it back. A standard collection of James's writings, spanning his psychological, philosophical, and religious works is *The Writings of William James,* edited by John J. McDermott (1978). Although we have provided the publication information for the original editions, many of his most important works, including *Pragmatism, The Meaning of Truth, The Principles of Psychology, The Varieties of Religious Experience* and *The Will to Believe* are available in inexpensive paperback editions from several presses, including Hackett, Prometheus, and Dover.

As a member of one of the most fascinating American families, William James is the subject of many biographical works. Two key intellectual biographies that are now available in reprint editions are Ralph Barton Perry's (1996) *The Thought and Character of William James* and Jacques Barzun's (2002) *A Stroll with William James,* both of which are at once reliable guides to the life of William James and helpful introductions to the main contours of his thought. A more recent biography of note is Linda Simon's (1999) *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James.* We anticipate that biographical interest in James is likely to increase vastly once the twelve volume collection of *The Correspondence of William James* is completed; as of this writing, eleven volumes are in print.

James began his career as a physician. Shortly after starting his teaching career at Harvard, he grew interested in psychology, and by 1890 published the seminal two-volume work, *The Principles of Psychology.* Not content with the achievement of having placed psychology upon a firm scientific footing, James turned to philosophy and composed several works that have proven pivotal in the tradition of American philosophy. At the end of his career, he published *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* a groundbreaking work in the philosophy, psychology, and sociology of religion.

As one may expect, much of the academic attention paid to James is fixed on the project of synthesizing his diverse intellectual endeavors into a single philosophical vision. Some of the more important exami-

nations of James's thought are Charlene Haddock Seigfried's (1990) *William James's Radical Reconstruction of Philosophy,* Gerald Myers's (2001) *William James: His Life and Thought,* William Gavin's (1992) *William James and the Reinstatement of the Vague,* Richard Gale's (1999) *The Divided Self of William James*, and Phil Oliver's (2000) *William James's Springs of Delight*. In addition, *The Cambridge Companion to William James,* edited by Ruth Anna Putnam (1997), features essays by contemporary scholars on all major aspects of James's thought.

James's *Pragmatism* has been his most influential contribution to philosophy; however, when taken in isolation from his other work, it is not a sufficient expression of James's philosophy. This is perhaps why James's pragmatism has been the subject of so much criticism.

The idea driving all of James's philosophical work is *radical empiricism,* the view that experience is primary and thus the proper beginning of all philosophical reflection. Earlier philosophies have taken as their starting point self-evident truths, consciousness, or the physical world; James, by contrast, held that these categories are merely discriminations made within experience. Further, philosophy must remain faithful to experience; the facts of experience are not to be eliminated in the process of philosophical reflection. Thus, unlike traditional empiricisms, which begin with a rigid notion of experience, reducing it to atomic ideas derived from our isolated senses, radical empiricism holds that *continuities* and *relations* are as much a part of experience as objects and properties. This establishes chance, risk and novelty as ineradicable features of experience, and weighs against any philosophy that attempts to present a closed system.

James saw pragmatism as the philosophical approach most in line with radical empiricism. Following Peirce, he maintained that beliefs were primarily guides for action. Hence the meaning of an idea or belief is a matter of the practical consequences of adopting it. However, unlike Peirce, who understood the practical consequences of a belief in observational terms, James's radical empiricism led him to argue that the *psychological* effects of holding a belief were among its practical implications. Thus he argued in his most famous essay, "The Will to Believe," that those for whom religious belief is essential and efficacious are justified, even in the absence of compelling evidence, in holding it.

James argued that the truth of a belief is bound up with the consequences of believing it; truth is, on James's view, what "works" or what is good to believe. He claimed that, in cases in which empirical evidence is insufficient but the decision to commit is urgent, believing a proposi-

tion may contribute to its truth. Since James never gave his pragmatic theory of truth a sufficiently precise exposition, much of the current James scholarship is focused on properly formulating and evaluating the theory. A good guide to this issue is Harvey Cormier's (2000) *The Truth is What Works*; one may also consult Hilary Putnam's contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to William James* (cited above), entitled "James's Theory of Truth."

The argument associated with James's "The Will to Believe" essay is examined in Robert O'Connell's (1984) *William James on the Courage to Believe* and James Wernham's (1987) *James's Will-to-Believe Doctrine.* James's rejection in "The Will to Believe" of the view, known as evidentialism, that it is epistemically irresponsible to adopt a belief without first gathering adequate evidence for it, lies at the heart of a rapidly growing literature on what is known as the "ethics of belief." Although this body of work does not focus exclusively on James, Jamesian themes are found throughout; a good place to begin exploring the controversy is in Jonathan Adler's (2002) *Belief's Own Ethics*.

James's contemporary influence extends beyond the area of epistemology. Several recent books have focused on James's philosophy of religion, his psychology, and his ethics and social philosophy. Here we recommend Ellen K. Suckiel's (1996) *Heaven's Champion,* David Lamberth's (1999) *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience,* James Edie's (1987) *William James and Phenomenology*, and George Cotkin's (1989) *William James: Public Philosopher.*

John Dewey

John Dewey's *Works* are published by Southern Illinois University Press in thirty-seven volumes, edited by Jo Ann Boydston. The volumes are organized into three chronological periods: *Early Works* (five volumes), *Middle Works* (fifteen volumes), and *Later Works* (seventeen volumes). The complete *Works* is also available in a CD-ROM version; in addition, a CD-ROM series of Dewey's *Correspondence* is now in progress. A two-volume *Essential Dewey*, edited by Larry Hickman and Thomas Alexander (1998), is available from Indiana University Press and contains all of Dewey's most important writings. An earlier collection, *The Philosophy of John Dewey,* edited by John McDermott (1981), features an excellent selection of central material.

Dewey lived a long and eventful life, and has subsequently received significant attention from intellectual historians and biographers. George Dykhuizen's (1974) *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* remains

the best intellectual biography of Dewey. Three recent biographical treatments, Robert Westbrook's (1993) *John Dewey and American Democracy,* Alan Ryan's (1997) *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*, and Stephen Rockefeller's (1994) *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism,* have helped place Dewey's ideas in proper historical context.

A central theme in Dewey's pragmatism is the idea of transaction and the correlative rejection of philosophies that assimilate knowers to passive observers or spectators. Dewey saw everything, from experience and knowledge to language, logic, and politics in terms of the dynamic interaction of diverse forces. He thought that the idea of transaction offered a way to overcome many of the pernicious dualisms infecting traditional philosophy. These dualisms—of mind and body, experience and reason, and fact and value—were, in Dewey's judgment, the sources of such philosophical conundrums as skepticism, relativism, solipsism and nihilism. Recognizing these puzzles as fruitless and diversionary, Dewey called for a philosophy that was responsive to the problems of everyday life. Drawing heavily upon Peirce and James, Dewey took questions of philosophical *method* to be of the utmost importance and called for the application of the "experimental method" or the "method of intelligence" as exemplified in the natural sciences to all areas of life. The emphasis on method serves to unify Dewey's philosophy, rendering his views on epistemology and logic continuous with his ethics and political philosophy.

Of the pragmatists, John Dewey has attracted the most attention among contemporary American philosophers. Accordingly, book-length examinations of nearly every aspect of his philosophy are readily available. The first volume of Paul Arthur Schilpp's (1989) *The Philosophy of John Dewey, Library of Living Philosophers* features critical essays by Dewey's peers on all major areas of his thought, as does the collection edited by Sidney Morgenbesser (1978), *Dewey and his Critics.* A recent collection edited by Larry Hickman (1998), *Reading Dewey,* brings together essays by many of today's leading Dewey scholars to reevaluate Dewey's thought. One of the most influential book-length surveys of the whole of Dewey's philosophy is Ralph Sleeper's (2001) *The Necessity of Pragmatism,* though a reprint of Sidney Hook's 1939 book, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait* (1995), Richard Bernstein's (1981) *John Dewey,* and Raymond Boisvert's (1997) *John Dewey: Rethinking Our Time* may be more suitable as general introductions.

The standard treatments of Dewey's ethical theory are James Gouinlock's (1972) *John Dewey's Philosophy of Value* and a more recent study by Jennifer Welchman (1997) entitled *Dewey's Ethical Thought.* The authoritative exposition of Deweyan aesthetics is Thomas Alexander's (1987) *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience, and Nature,* and a similarly powerful treatment of his metaphysics is Raymond Boisvert's (1988) *Dewey's Metaphysics.* Dewey maintained that logic is the theory of proper inquiry, and therefore his writings on logical theory, epistemology, philosophy of language, and philosophy of science tend to run together. Major studies of these aspects of Dewey's thought include Georges Dicker's (1976) *John Dewey's Philosophy of Knowing* and Thomas Burke's (1998) *Dewey's New Logic.* A recent collection of essays devoted to issues connected with Dewey's view of logic is *Dewey's Logical Theory: New Studies and Interpretations,* edited by Thomas Burke, Micah Hester, and Robert Talisse (2002).

Dewey's social and political thought has attracted special interest lately, perhaps due to the surge of work in democratic theory among philosophers and political scientists. Dewey advocated a participatory model of democratic politics, according to which the essence of the democratic process consists in an open exchange of ideas as a means to addressing shared social problems. Democratic processes, however, were not to be understood as focused exclusively on the state; rather, Dewey held that democracy is a way of life, a mode of living in community that must be reflected in all social relationships. These ideas are developed in interesting ways by Dewey's colleague in Chicago, George H. Mead in works such as *Mind, Self, and Society* (1967) and *Philosophy of the Act* (1972); Andrew Reck (1981) has edited a volume of Mead's *Selected Writings.* Dewey's democratic theory is thus closely related to recent models of "deliberative" or "discursive" democracy, and one can readily discern Dewey's influence on theorists such as Jurgen Habermas.

The growing interest in Deweyan democracy has spawned several recent examinations of Dewey's political thought. Of this work, James Campbell's (1995) *Understanding John Dewey* and Michael Eldridge's (1998) *Transforming Experience* are the most reliable. William Caspary's (2000) *Dewey on Democracy,* Daniel Savage's (2001) *John Dewey's Liberalism,* and the essays collected in John Stuhr's (1993) edited volume, *Philosophy and the Reconstruction of Culture,* attempt to extend Deweyan political philosophy to current issues. The most recent book along these lines is *In Dewey's Wake* (2003), edited by William J. Gavin.

Josiah Royce

Josiah Royce (1855–1916) was a Californian who taught at Harvard at the same time as William James and George Santayana. The collapse of Hegelian idealism in the early part of the twentieth century buried interest in his work for nearly fifty years. This is especially unfortunate because he presented a thoroughly Americanized version of idealism—one on which pragmatism had a deep influence. In *The World and the Individual* (1899), he shared Hegel's search for the Absolute, but returned to more traditional modes of thought in conceiving of it as a person. He celebrated the significance of individuals as unique and immortal. He replaced Hegel's state with the community and reestablished high ideals by insisting that active commitment or loyalty to causes is the foundation of the moral life.

Royce argued that the finite human mind sees a time-bound world requiring, just as the pragmatists maintain, intelligent and energetic efforts to improve it. The struggle to achieve the good is, therefore, the hallmark of temporal existence; we are obliged to defeat evil, yet can never completely succeed. God, by contrast, views the world under the form of eternity. From that point of view, the struggle is already won and our efforts are not only justified but also crowned with fruit. Not shrinking from high metaphysics, Royce offered an explanation of evil as essential for a good world and attempted to demonstrate how it is possible for finite humans to attain unity with the divine.

Royce's 1908 book, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* is available in a cheap paperback edition (1995). A good selection from his works has been edited by John Roth (1971) under the title *The Philosophy of Josiah Royce;* also, John McDermott (1969) has edited a fine two-volume collection of *The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce.* John Clendenning's (1998) *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce* is a good introduction to Royce and his philosophical system. John E. Smith (1950) has done much to keep Royce in the public eye with his *Royce's Social Infinite.* Frank Oppenheim's (1980) *Royce's Voyage Down Under* is a searching study of the interplay of Royce's personal and intellectual lives on the occasion of his trip to Australia. His later works, *Royce's Mature Philosophy of Religion* (1987) and *Royce's Mature Ethics* (1993) provide groundbreaking accounts of Royce's later philosophical views. Jacqueline Kegley's (1996) *Genuine Individuals and Genuine Communities* examines Royce's ideas about the constitution of communities. The attractiveness of Royce's ideas is best displayed in Griffin Trotter's (1997) *The Loyal Physician,* offering an intriguing reconceptualization of the ethics of physicians along Roycean lines.

George Santayana

Santayana (1863–1952) was born in Spain but came to the United States at the age of nine. His early five-volume work, *The Life of Reason* (1905–06), was celebrated as a naturalistic version of Hegel's phenomenology, tracing the development of the human spirit in social life, religion, art, and science. To some, this line of thought seemed disconnected from his later, ontological reflections. In reality, however, throughout his long philosophical life, Santayana attempted to reconcile what he thought was a salutary materialism with the moral and spiritual values championed by the great religions. This is what explains the remarkable combination in his thought of single-minded naturalism with significant Platonic elements.

Santayana's materialism consists of the claim that the world is a single field of action continuous with our bodies. But the view is not reductive: consciousness is an irreducible accompaniment of organic life. As he discussed at length in the four volumes of *Realms of Being* (1927, 1930, 1938, 1940), matter and the light of awareness constitute two modes of being; eternal essences and unchanging truth round out the four. The thrust of the ontology is moral, pointing to the possibility of a spiritual life in which we are absorbed in the immediate beauty of the world rather than drowning in its instrumentalities. In *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923), he launched a vigorous attack on skepticism and characterized knowledge, very much like Dewey, as mediated fallible belief rather than direct grasp of reality. But in spirituality, even knowledge is transcended as we are lost, at least for the moment, in timeless contemplation.

Although Santayana was deeply influenced by pragmatism, his is not primarily a social philosophy. He came close to being an American existentialist, interested in the plight of the private soul under conditions of stress and distraction. His assessment of America in terms of his notion of "the genteel tradition" (*The Genteel Tradition at Bay, 1931*) made him a celebrity among social critics, and yet his thought went into decline for nearly thirty years after his death. Since then, he has enjoyed a remarkable renaissance: his collected works, including thousands of letters, are in the process of publication, a philosophical society is dedicated to exploring his system, and the journal, *Overheard in Seville,* is publishing articles on his thought.

Timothy Sprigge's (1995) *George Santayana* is a good introduction to every aspect of Santayana's philosophy. John Lachs's (1988) *George Santayana* focuses on his later, ontological works. Willard Arnett's

(1968) *George Santayana* offers an urbane introduction to Santayana's philosophy as one of ultimate disillusion. Anthony Woodward's (1988) *Living in the Eternal* is an appreciation of Santayana's moral and spiritual sensitivity; Henry Levinson's (1992) *Santayana, Pragmatism and the Spiritual Life* focuses on his social and political thought in the broader context of American political life. For an explication of the details of Santayana's political thought, the reader may consult Beth Singer's (1970) *The Rational Society. Animal Faith and Spiritual Life,* edited by John Lachs (1967), offers some previously unpublished essays of Santayana, along with critical assessments of his thought. *Thinking in the Ruins,* by Michael Hodges and John Lachs (2000), explores the remarkable similarities between Santayana and Wittgenstein.

Personalism

Personalism is a philosophical movement that arose largely as a response to the tendency of German idealism to undervalue the individual. Borden Parker Bowne, the initiator of personalism, taught at Boston University and developed a system grounded in the moral thought of Kant. In *Personalism* (1908), *Metaphysics* (1898) and other books he explained that the concept of the conscious person constitutes his central category. Persons may be finite, such as human individuals, or infinite, such as God. In either case, the hallmarks of personality are self-consciousness, knowledge, and self-control. This approach tends to humanize the world by displaying the struggle of individuals as the central drama of creation.

Bowne's students developed his ideas by relating them to other contemporary philosophies. Edgar S. Brightman's (1958) *Person and Reality; An Introduction to Metaphysics* is a full-fledged account of the metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and aesthetics of personalism. Peter Bertocci's works show his understanding of the close relationship of personalism to the idealisms of Royce and William Ernest Hocking. Tom Buford's (1984) *Personal Philosophy* and other books develop the implications of personalism. Today, there is a small but growing contingent of personalists organizing international conferences and publishing articles in *The Personalist.*

Process Philosophy

Although process metaphysics goes back at least to Heraclitus, its self-conscious identification of itself as a special approach to philosophy grew out of the work of Whitehead. Alfred North Whitehead was born in England and devoted his early career to science and the development,

with Bertrand Russell, of symbolic logic. Later, his interest shifted to metaphysics and, through a series of influential books and his professorship at Harvard, captivated an entire generation of philosophers in the United States. *Process and Reality* (1927–1928, 1978), *Science and the Modern World* (1925, 1967), and *Adventures of Ideas* (1933, 1967) offer the best expositions of his system, which views momentary "actual occasions" as the building blocks of the universe. These occasions involve "prehensions," which are creative unifications of prevailing lines of influence.

Whitehead's attack on "vacuous actuality" is a way of calling to account those who think the universe consists of unsensing atoms or subatomic particles. His thrust is clearly to avoid materialism and to show that the model of human experience can open up the internal structure of the world process. *A Key to Whitehead's Process and Reality* by Donald Sherburne (1981) is an excellent introduction to Whitehead's thought. *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought* (1971), edited by Brown, James and Reeves contains the vigorous debate between Sherburne and John Cobb about whether Whitehead's system requires a God. Lewis Ford (1984) presents detailed studies of Whitehead's development in *The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics.* George Kline, George Allen, and George Lucas, among many others, have engaged in the clarification, explication and expansion of Whiteheadian ideas in the journal, *Process Studies.* The latest study of Whiteheadian ideas is Jude Jones's (1998) *Intensity.*

Two students of Whitehead, who happened to be the first editors of Peirce's works as well, have become significant process philosophers in their own rights. Charles Hartshorne took a special interest in theology, developing the idea of a processive finite/infinite God in *Divine Relativity* (1983). Paul Weiss struggled throughout his long life to formulate a coherent and comprehensive philosophical system. *Modes of Being* (1968) is his most sustained and perhaps most successful attempt. Process philosophy as a separate approach to the problems of thought appears to be running out of energy at the time of this writing. Part of the reason for this may be its success in convincing many philosophers in other traditions of the centrality of time, change, and process in all of life.

American Philosophy in Transition: Neopragmatism

Thus far, we have focused largely upon the classical pragmatists and recent research into their thought. However, pragmatism is also a living resource for original philosophical thinking. Its central tenets influenced the work of C.I. Lewis, Sidney Hook, W. Quine and Don-

ald Davidson. The past twenty years have seen vigorous revivals of pragmatism along multiple lines of development. The version called "neopragmatism," associated with the work of Richard Rorty, is at the center of many contemporary debates. Rorty's version of pragmatism begins with the classical pragmatists' radical critique of traditional philosophy and cultivates a self-consciously anti-philosophical perspective on science, language, and culture. The key texts here are Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1981) and his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989). The critical commentary devoted to Rorty is literally mountainous and cannot be fully reviewed here; one place to begin is the volume *Rorty and Pragmatism: The Philosopher Responds to his Critics*, edited by Herman Saatkamp (1995). A more focused treatment of the issue of Rorty's relation to classical pragmatism can be found in David Hildebrand's (2003) *Beyond Realism and Anti-Realism.*

It is a common misperception that Rorty is the sole inheritor of pragmatism. In reality, many other philosophers also draw from pragmatist sources in developing new philosophical positions. This is perhaps most evident in the work of Susan Haack and Joseph Margolis. Haack defends a new approach to epistemology rooted in Peirce's theory of inquiry in her *Evidence and Inquiry* (1995); she develops positions on a host of social issues in her provocative *Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate* (2000). Margolis presents a pragmatist theory of art, culture, and history in his *Pragmatism Without Foundations* (1989). In his *Genealogical Pragmatism* (1997) and the more recent *Pragmatism, Postmodernism, and the Future of Philosophy* (2002), John J. Stuhr utilizes classical pragmatist sources to flesh out a critical version of social pragmatism that addresses the concerns of postmodernist and deconstructionist critics of philosophy. In *Speculative Pragmatism,* Sandra Rosenthal (1986) argues that pragmatism has a substantial and defensible metaphysics.

In *The Culture of Experience* (1976) and in *Streams of Experience* (1987), John McDermott finds in pragmatism the inspiration for a sensitive urban aesthetics. Cheryl Misak develops Peircean ideas into a powerful theory of moral and political deliberation in her *Truth, Politics, and Morality* (2000). The influence of Mead and of Justus Buchler are decisive in a novel theory of rights developed by Beth Singer (1993) in *Operative Rights. Habits of Hope* (2001) by Patrick Shade presents a pragmatic account of hope. In *Consciousness Reconsidered,* Owen Flanagan (1993) develops Jamesian views about consciousness and psychology. James is becoming a significant influence on questions of bioethics

through the work of Micah Hester (2001) in *Community as Healing;* Glenn McGee's (2000) *The Perfect Baby* introduces Deweyan themes into issues of genetic enhancement; Larry Hickman (2001) presents a pragmatist theory of technology in his *Philosophical Tools for Technological Culture.* Andrew Light (2003) has recently developed an approach to film criticism based on pragmatist ideals of social criticism in a book entitled *Reel Arguments.*

As these and other developments suggest, the American pragmatist tradition continues to thrive and grow. Process philosophy, personalism, naturalism and other approaches to philosophy are also vigorously represented in the increasingly pluralistic philosophical world of the United States.

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Notes

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As these and other developments suggest, the American pragmatist tradition continues to thrive and grow. Process philosophy, personalism, naturalism and other approaches to philosophy are also vigorously represented in the increasingly pluralistic philosophical world of the United States.

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